

VANDALISM

Duxbury family target of anti-Semitism

By Jordana Hart
GLOBE STAFF

Vandals shot paint balls and threw a rock through the glass door of a Jewish home in Duxbury last week and left a message condemning the family for not decorating their house for Christmas, Duxbury police confirmed yesterday.

The family, which police declined to name, was at home on Marshall Street around 8 p.m. Friday night when they heard the crash of breaking glass and the thud of red and green paint balls against the front of their house.

The vandals left a one-sentence note, handwritten in red and green ink on a torn piece of notebook paper in the mailbox: "This is what happens when you don't decorate for Christmas."

Police are treating the vandalism as a possible hate crime.

"We are taking it very, very seriously," said Duxbury Sergeant Lew- is Chubb. Police have no suspects.

The Anti-Defamation League in Boston said the attack is one of several anti-Semitic incidents reported

around Greater Boston in the past two weeks.

"It's become common for these acts to take place around Christmas," said David Bunis, a civil rights litigator and the ADL's civil rights chairman. "In the case of Duxbury, it appears the violent acts were directly related to the fact that the victims did not celebrate Christmas."

Bunis said such attacks sometimes are an extension of classroom harassment of Jewish children.

"They are made to feel extremely awkward and ostracized," he said. "First they make a kid feel bad at school, and then they are throwing rocks at his house because he doesn't have a Christmas tree."

In other recent incidents, three Andover High School students were arrested last week in connection with burning a huge swastika into their school's field the night of Nov. 23.

On Dec. 9, the parents of Newton North High School students received a letter from the principal warning about anti-Semitic and anti-gay graffiti found in the girls and boys bathrooms at the school.

Last week, Winchester High School students reported large, spray-painted scenes of a lynching and concentration-camp smokestacks in the school's parking lot.

Yesterday, the ADL learned a Foxborough High School student was arrested for malicious destruction of property after he allegedly drew a swastika on a firehose case inside the school. The ADL is trying to determine why the boy was not charged with committing a hate crime.

Meanwhile, Duxbury's Jewish leaders yesterday condemned the vandalism on Marshall Street and sent a letter to the Duxbury Interfaith Council asking the clergy to urge their congregations to speak out against the incident — and perhaps even provide information that could lead to an arrest.

"Expressions of support and sympathy in the form of sermons or public statements from religious leaders can do much to help the victims feel that they are not alone," wrote Kenneth Stone, president of the 4-year-old Congregation Shirat Hayam, which has about 55 families.